



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## VABHHCS AWARDED ACCREDITATION FROM THE JOINT COMMISSION

VA Black Hills Health Care System has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® and accreditation by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards. The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a health care organization's commitment to providing safe, quality patient care.

VA Black Hills underwent a rigorous, unannounced onsite review August 27-30, 2019. During the visit, a team of Joint Commission reviewers evaluated compliance with standards spanning several areas including both hospitals, home-based care, and behavioral health.

The Joint Commission's standards are developed in consultation with health care experts and providers, measurement experts and patients. They are informed by scientific literature and expert consensus to help health care organizations measure, assess and improve performance. The surveyors also conducted onsite observations and interviews.

"We are extremely proud of our continued accreditation by The Joint Commission. It confirms our significant investment in the quality of care we provide to veterans every day," said Sandra Horsman, Director, VA Black Hills Health Care System. "Joint Commission accreditation is part of the framework we use to sustain a culture of excellence in health care and patient experience."

VA Black Hills provides primary, surgical, behavioral health, Community Living Centers, and Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP) care. The health care system consists of two medical centers located at Hot Springs, established in 1930, and Fort Meade, opened in 1946, and a VA staffed Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) located in Rapid City, SD. Contract CBOCs are in Pierre, Winner, and Mission, SD, and Scottsbluff, NE. Outpatient Clinics operate in Pine Ridge, SD; Gordon, NE; and Newcastle, WY.

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# MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY WHITLOCK

Typically, when we hear the word “registry” we think of a gift registry for weddings, showers, births, graduations, and anniversaries. But, there is another kind of registry veterans need to be aware of.

The VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is available to eligible veterans and service members to document their exposures and report health concerns through an online questionnaire.

Eligible veterans and service members include those who served in:

- Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm
- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn
- Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001.

The use of open burn pits was a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside of the U.S., such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Airborne hazards like smoke, and other emissions, from these pits contained an unknown mixture of substances that may have short and long-term health effects, especially for individuals who were exposed for longer periods or those with pre-existing conditions such as asthma or other lung or heart conditions.

At year-end, South Dakota only had 899 veterans and service members who completed and submitted the registry.

This registry allows veterans to become more aware of their own health and to help identify health conditions possibly related to burn pit exposure or other airborne hazards during military service.

What veterans should know:

- There's no cost to participate
- Participation is not required for other VA benefits such as disability compensation
- Enrollment in VA health care is not required
- It takes about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire
- Veterans can do it in one sitting or save it and come back later
- Veterans can print and use the completed questionnaire to discuss concerns with their healthcare providers.



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# **BURN PIT REGISTRY (CONTINUED)**

Veterans can access the registry at: <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>

Much like Agent Orange, many health effects to chemical exposure are not diagnosed or determined until well after exposure when scientific studies are completed. Participation contributes to research on airborne hazards and health, which helps improve the quality of care for all veterans. The more information the VA and Congress have, the easier it will be to secure medical assistance.

As always, our staff is available to assist you and/or answer any questions (605.333.6869).

To all the men and women who have served our country, thank you.

## **SIoux FALLS VET CENTER HOSTING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS**

The Sioux Falls Vet Center is offering two new programs, the Financial Peace-Military Edition and the Emotional Self Care Group.

The Financial Peace-Military Education Group is a nine-week class designed to help veterans and their significant others, if they are in a relationship, to develop and implement financial planning that can help to manage money more effectively. The purpose is to provide tools to improve skills and planning to better manage household financial resources.

This program will be held at the Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) from 10:00 am—11:30 am on Tuesdays from February 4 through March 31.

The Emotional Self Care Group is a six-week class designed to help veterans develop and implement healthier emotional self-care strategies. The purpose is to provide tools to improve skills to better manage emotions and the impact on their mental health and well being.

This program will be held at the Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) from 1:00 pm—2:30 pm on Tuesdays from February 4 through March 10.

Veterans new to the Vet Center need to register for services and complete the Intake Process prior to starting either group. Questions should be directed Morris Patzlaff at the Sioux Falls Vet Center 605) 330-4552.



# VABHHCS SEEKS ENTRIES FOR 2020 VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITION

The VA Black Hills Health Care System (VA BHHCS) is seeking entries for their annual creative arts competition. This is an exciting opportunity for veterans to demonstrate their skills in visual arts, creative writing, and performing arts.

Veterans enrolled at VA BHHCS or a resident in a state Veteran's Home are eligible to compete. The art must have been created after April 1, 2019, with an exception for Military Combat Experience entries. All submissions must be received by the February 14<sup>th</sup> deadline to compete in the Fort Meade show or by February 29<sup>th</sup> to compete in the Hot Springs show.

The public is invited to view the entries at two shows on March 4, 2020 in Building 145, Classroom 108 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm at the Fort Meade VA campus and on March 11, 2020 in the Rotunda, Building 1 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Hot Springs VA campus.

The competition includes 51 categories in the visual arts division that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In addition, there are 100 categories in the performing arts division including all aspects of music, dance, drama, and creative writing. A panel of local artists will judge entries based on creativity, skill, originality, and overall presentation. Select winners at the local level are invited to compete at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The purpose of the National Veterans Creative Arts competition is to recognize veterans for their creative and artistic ability and to demonstrate the therapeutic benefits of the arts.

Creative art therapy is recognized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities.

For rules and registration information, please contact Mike Ellis at 347-2511 extension 17658 or Mary Culbertson at 745-2000 extension 22924.







# National Veterans Creative Arts Competition

*Painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, woodcarving, needlework, leatherwork, kits, etc.*



## 2020 NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITION

A local art show will be held  
February 5, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m.  
in the Chapel on the 3rd floor at the  
Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.  
You are also invited to an awards reception  
for the artists at 1:30 p.m.

### For Entry Information Please Contact:

Sioux Falls VA HCS staff at (605) 336-3230 Denise Schwardt Ext. 6418; Ardelle Fiedler Ext. 5982 or Rochelle Binion Ext. 6257

- All entries must have been created within the last year by Veterans who receive care from the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System.

**Competition Entry Deadline**  
**February 1, 2020**

Presented By

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



American Legion  
Auxiliary

# **SDHDA HOSTING LISTENING SESSIONS REGARDING HOUSING PROGRAMS**

South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA), in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, will be hosting five listening sessions around the state to solicit comments on the 2020 Annual Action Plan of the Consolidated Plan and the allocation plans for the HOME, Housing Tax Credits, Housing Trust Fund, Emergency Solutions Grant, and Housing Opportunity Fund Programs.

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year housing and community development planning document that includes how the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program funds will be allocated. The goals of these programs are to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities to low- and moderate-income persons.

Annually the state of South Dakota receives approximately \$12.4 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to support the CDBG, ESG, HTF and HOME programs. As a prerequisite to receive funds from HUD, South Dakota must have an approved Consolidated Plan and annual action plans.

The Housing Tax Credit Program is a tax credit incentive to construct, acquire and/or rehabilitate housing for low-income households through the Internal Revenue Service. SDHDA receives approximately \$3.2 million annually to allocate through this program.

The Housing Opportunity Fund (HOF) Program was created through Senate Bill 235 during the 2013 legislative session. HOF Funds can be used for rental housing, homeownership, land trusts and homelessness prevention activities.

The listening sessions are an opportunity for the public to provide their comments, suggestions and ideas prior to drafting the 2020-2021 plans. The public will have another chance to provide written comments once the draft plans have been released in March.

Persons interested in making suggestions for changes to the existing plans may do so by appearing at one of the listening sessions scheduled for Rapid City, Pierre, Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, and Yankton, or by sending written comments to SDHDA, PO Box 1237, Pierre, SD 57501, by 5:00 pm CT, Feb. 10.

The listening sessions will be held at the following locations on the respective dates:

Jan 27—1:00 pm (MT)—Rapid City Public Library Hoyt Meeting Room (610 Quincy St.)

Jan 28—1:00 pm (CT)—Pierre SDHDA Board Room (3060 E. Elizabeth St.)

Jan 29—1:00 pm (CT)—Aberdeen Public Safety Building Community Room (114 2nd Ave. SE)

Feb 3—1:00 pm (CT)—Downtown Sioux Falls Library—Meeting Room A (200 N. Dakota Ave.)

Feb 4—9:00 am (CT)—Yankton Planning Development District III – Meeting Room (1808 Summit St.)

For more information contact Lorraine Polak at 605.773.3181 or [Lorraine@sdhda.org](mailto:Lorraine@sdhda.org).



**Standing Rock Sioux Tribe  
Department of Veterans Affairs**



**ALL VETERANS INVITED**

# **US Congressional Hearing on Veteran Health Issues with the Veterans Administration**

25 January 2020, Saturday, 0900 hours (9 am)

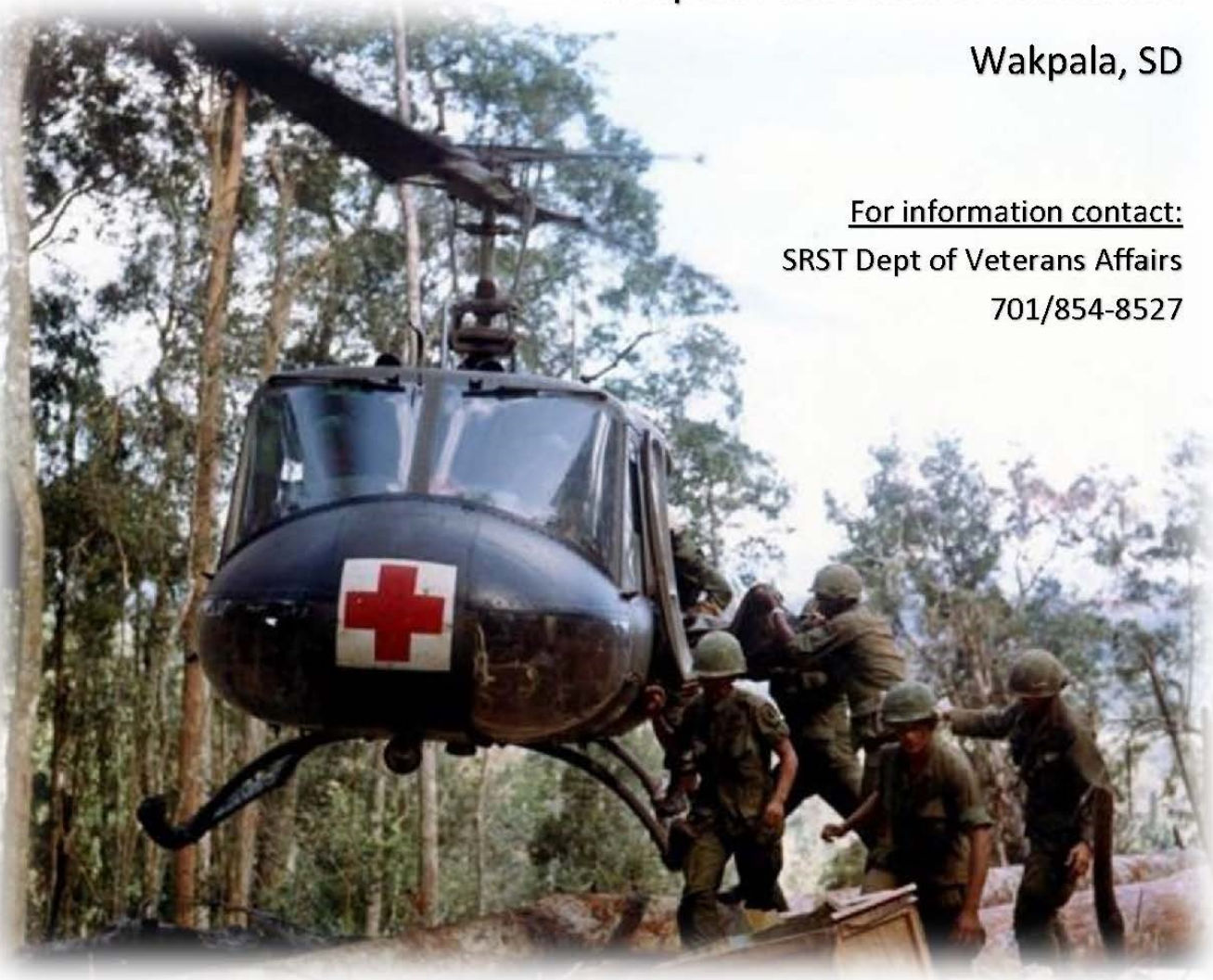
Wakpala Public School Auditorium

Wakpala, SD

For information contact:

SRST Dept of Veterans Affairs

701/854-8527



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 17—BHSU Military Appreciation Night - BHSU Young Center—Spearfish—5:30 pm (MT)  
Jan 18—Military Family Carnival and Resource Fair—Central Church (2628 W. Ralph Rogers Rd)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—5:00 pm (CT)  
Jan 20—State Offices Closed  
Jan 25—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Veterans Hearing—Wakpala Public School Auditorium—9:00 am (CT)  
Jan 27—VFW State Legislative Mixer—Moose Lodge—Fort Pierre—6:00—8:30 pm (CT)  
Feb 5—SFVAHCS Art Show—Sioux Falls VA Medical Center Chapel—3rd Floor—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)  
Feb 10—State American Legion Legislative Reception—AL Post 8—Pierre—5:30—8:00 pm (CT)  
Feb 21-23—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center—Oacoma  
Mar 4—VABHHCS Art Show—Fort Meade VA Campus—Building 145 Classroom 109—1:00 pm (MT)  
Mar 6—Drop-In Legal Service for Veterans—DAV Sioux Falls Chapter—1519 W. 51st Street—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)  
Mar 11—VABHHCS Art Show—Hot Springs VA Campus—Building 1 Rotunda—1:00 pm (MT)  
Mar 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Mar 25—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown  
May 8—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
May 12—8th Annual WWII Veterans Luncheon—TREA Building—Rapid City—11:00 am (MT)  
May 15-17—DAV State Convention—Brookings  
May 30—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 7  
June 3-7—VFW State Convention—Aberdeen  
Jun 18-21—American legion State Convention—Huron  
Jul 10—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Bldg. 145—Room 108—Fort Meade VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
Aug 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota Conference Center—Pierre  
Sep 3—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair  
Sep 3-7—SD State Fair  
Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8 (Tentative)  
Sep 11—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Oct 11—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 (Tentative)  
Nov 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
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